



**Audio recordings of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission meetings can be found on the Recordings Tab.**

**June 8, 2022**

Commission Members Present: Sandy Scott, Dick Story, Charlie Athey, Paula Reeder, and Rob Thompson

Members Absent: Aaron Bramble and Tracey Williams

Also in Attendance: Jamie Williams, Director, Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Jana Carter, Tourism Manager, Shalyn Boulden, Administrative Specialist, Economic and Tourism Development; Bill Mackey, Director, Planning, Housing, and Zoning; Shelley Heller, County Administrator; and Bob Jacob, County Commissioner

At 2:59 p.m. Mr. Story called the meeting to order. Mr. Story requested a motion to approve the minutes from May 11, 2022, meeting and offered a few amendments. On a motion by Mr. Athey and seconded by Ms. Reeder, May 11, 2022, minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

The Economic and Tourism Development Commission welcomed Paula Reeder, a newly appointed commission member. Ms. Reeder introduced herself and shared a little about herself and her desire to serve.

Ms. Boulden celebrated her one year as the Administrative Specialist with Kent County Economic and Tourism Development.

Susan O'Neill, Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC), Nancy LaJoice, Senior Business Development Representative, Maryland Department of Commerce, and Jamie Williams presented information on the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund. The Upper Shore Regional Council, which represents Kent, Queen Anne's, and Cecil County, will receive \$10 million, out of \$50 million from the Maryland Department of Commerce. Each County will be receiving \$2.9 million to fund projects that will focus on Economic Development and the USRC will retain \$1.3 million for regional projects. The application from the USRC is due to the Maryland Department of Commerce by September 2, 2022. The presentation was shared with all attendees. Jamie Williams suggested the creation of a project review committee and requested two volunteers from the Commission. Ms. Reeder and Mr. Thompson volunteered to review the project submissions.

Mr. Mackey shared the zoning text amendment to clarify the area of use for solar array panels as a special exception in the agricultural zoning district is working its way through the process. The zoning text amendment to address *septic tank maintenance and excavation* as a special exception in the Village District is also in process.

The Technical Advisory Committee met and reviewed seven items. All items were related to residential uses except a lot line adjustment to add 28 acres to The Wharf at Handy's Point. A future project to expand the marina may be in development, no further information is available at this time.

The next meeting of the Comprehensive Rezoning Update Task Force is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27, 2022. The last of the specific text changes will be addressed, and the consultant will present recommendations related to the signage chapter and the nonconformities chapter. The current goal is to address the consultant's work products by the end of this calendar year.

Atlantic Tractor is celebrating the grand opening of its new service facility at 621 Morgnec Road on Friday, July 8, 2022.

Jamie Williams shared Ms. Boulden is attending the Chesapeake Economic Development Basic Course and was awarded a Lofton scholarship to cover the cost. Ms. Jamie Williams will be attending Entrepreneurial Economic Development courses through the International Economic Development Council and was granted a scholarship to cover the cost of one of those courses. The Maryland Economic Development Association Primer is being held at City Garage and an email with information will be sent to the Economic and Tourism Development Commission members.

Ms. Carter shared that the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Music Across Maryland Tour is coming to Wilmer Park on August 6, 2022, with publicity and logistics being coordinated by Economic and Tourism Development, Main Street Chestertown, and the Kent Cultural Alliance. The Smithsonian is providing an exhibit to the Kent Cultural Alliance as a part of the Museums on Main Street Exhibit from April 29-June 6, 2023. The updated version of the 2022 Kent County Visitor's Guide was presented. Ms. Carter shared photographs provided by Photographer Jay Fleming of outdoor recreational activities and food and beverages images that will be used in future marketing efforts.

Ms. Wright provided an update. The interest form for the Economic and Tourism Development Commission has been updated and added to the website. Economic and Tourism Development is working with Connie Dean, Career and Technology Liaison, Queen Anne's County, on youth employment opportunities and created an online form for employers to submit open entry-level job listings to appear on the Kent County website as well as a rack card that was distributed to Kent County High School graduates, with a QR code that goes directly to the webpage.

Ms. Boulden provided businesses in Downtown Chestertown with window clings and table tents with a QR code link to the new Visitor's Guide in preparation for Tea Party Weekend. Once the print version of the Visitor's Guide arrived, Ms. Carter provided guides to Chestertown Marina and the Chestertown Visitor's Center. Ms. Boulden provided guides to businesses in Rock Hall and Chestertown and has plans to fulfill businesses in Galena, Kennedyville, and Millington in the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Jacob shared concerns about the lack of housing options in Kent County. The inventory is the lowest in 10 years, and 2021 was a great year for housing sales. Mr. Mackey shared that approximately 24 new houses are constructed in Kent County each year.

Ms. Reeder shared the supply chain and cost of materials has affected the residential construction markets. Mr. Thompson shared that the increase in interest rates has not affected buyers at this time, the continuation of increases in the interest rates are expected to have an impact. Mr. Story recommended a Town Hall be held. Jamie Williams, Councilman Tom Herz, Town of Chestertown, and Mr. Hunter shared that a Housing Conference was held and it was very well attended.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Ms. Scott, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:21 p.m. The Commission agreed to meet again on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Williams, CEcD, Director